

Dear Honorable Members of the Commerce Committee,

I care about animals and I oppose HB 5263, An Act Concerning the Processing of Rabbits for Consumption, and I do not want to see my tax dollars used to promote the killing of rabbits. Rabbits are wonderful animals—smart and sociable with unique personalities—and are also popular household pets.

Please keep in mind that due to public demand, many cosmetic companies no longer test on rabbits, many furriers no longer produce coats made from the pelts of rabbits, and laws have been passed that disallow sale of commercially bred rabbits in pet stores. Industry leaders PetSmart and Petco no longer sell rabbits. A few years ago, when Whole Foods tried selling rabbit meat, vigorous public outcry resulted in the discontinuation of the sale of rabbit meat by Whole Foods and other stores.

Another concern is that if passed, HB 5263 may exacerbate spread of Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHDV), a highly transmissible and fatal disease for wild and domestic rabbits that is spreading across the country.

In light of the emerging viral threats that jump the species barrier from animals to humans, Connecticut's Department of Agriculture should instead be promoting plant-based markets, including expansion and innovation of plant-based proteins (and eventually cultivated meat), to ensure a greater availability of more diverse, safe, and dependable protein sources.

Thank you,
Tanya Spiller
South Windsor, CT